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of critical and philosophic merit, has gone. It may still be expounded and argued for, no doubt, but it cannot be quoted as in itself a necessary or sufficient reason for saying anything.

RICHARD SMITH.

Cambridge, England.

MODERN SCIENCE AND THE ILLUSIONS OF PROFESSOR BERGSON.

By Hugh S. R. Elliot; with a Preface by Sir Ray Lankester.

London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1912. Pp. xix, 257.

Mr. Elliot is concerned here with M. Bergson's philosophy only so far as it claims to be based upon scientific facts and to account for the process of evolution. He gives a sufficiently clear and succinct account of the doctrines he is attacking (ch. II), and criticises them in detail (ch. III): the criticism is burdened with repetition and cannot be called concise. His other chapters, forming the major part of the book, attack metaphysics and defend mechanism. Science and he have no metaphysics: a judgment is the connection of two terms, and there is no term outside the universe and, therefore, no possible judgment about it. A very inadequate chapter on the history of philosophy backs this up. He defends "epiphenomenalism," as a theory now "known" by science: the mental states, however, are not "caused," since that is a term applicable only to matter and motion; nevertheless, he is a strict determinist. "Facts" alone can settle the question, and there is no intervention of a spiritual factor in science or art.

The book will not add to anyone's knowledge of science, and as philosophy it seems very inadequate and crude. But it demolishes much of the new philosophy.

R. SMITH.

Cambridge, England.

LAUGHTER: AN ESSAY ON THE MEANING OF THE COMIC. By

Henri Bergson. Authorized translation by Clondesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell. London: Macmillan & Co., 1911. Pp. 200.

This is a fascinating work, with all the clearness characteristic of French criticism and the carefulness of a philosophic thinker, and it is excellently done into English. But few will be converted to M. Bergson's theory of the comic.

Laughter is defined at the outset as a social corrective of the anti-social, and its cause has universal characteristics, however it occur. The laughable is always human: it is devoid of emotional elements and appeals to intelligence pure and simple; it appeals only to some social group and may be unintelligible to outsiders. It is the automatic and mechanical aspect of what should be living and free that makes us laugh.

With this as a *leitmotiv*, M. Bergson analyzes the comic in forms and movements, in situations and words, and in character.

The chapter dealing with this last phase is the most deeply interesting, for it gives us the author's views on art and its relation to life, and hints at his ethics. Comedy belongs neither to art nor to life; its position is equivocal. Art deals with the individual and real, comedy with types. Comedy organizes laughter, and its material is ready-made when life is seized upon by vanity.

In his conclusion he admits that we often sympathize with the comic character and are relieved from the strain of thinking. Again, "laughter is simply the result of a mechanism set up in us by nature or, what is almost the same thing, by our long acquaintance with social life. It goes off spontaneously. . . . It has no time to look where it hits" (p. 198). But the nature of this sympathy he leaves quite vague. We are told that laughter is often unjust, and should never be kind. If we push the matter farther, the result may be most unflattering: "Laughter is gaiety itself. But the philosopher, who gathers a handful to taste, may find that the substance is scanty and the after-taste bitter."

M. Bergson certainly makes this plausible and very interesting, but in the abstract it is not convincing. He often seems just to take up a *leitmotiv*,—as he would say,—quite arbitrarily; then he displays amazing skill in special pleading. It does not seem true that feeling and laughter are incompatible, and the argument in the book assumes,—for no given reason,—that the only possible feeling would be some form of sympathy. Again, laughter may usually be social, and its evolution may be entirely from social factors, and comedy as a form deals with social groups: but we do have laughter, deep, sincere, valuable, when we are alone and regardless of society. Even if this is his "mechanical" laughter, it is sufficiently notable to

make his treatment of the subject quite inadequate. He is altogether scornful of any other formulæ, which, however, might go some way to explain this "mechanical laughter." It is gross assumption that laughter is primarily social, and in any case the point is, what is laughter? M. Bergson only takes an obvious effect of much laughter, as its purpose; if we deny this initial assumption, his whole discussion is vitiated.

He discusses a very narrow range of the comic. From his first example, a man slipping in the street, to the pessimistic sentence with which he concludes (quoted above), we have one type of the comic alone, of which the former is sufficiently representative. Of the humorous we see little and hear next to nothing, but it cannot be sharply divorced from the comic and it violates many of his canons. He talks as if a man could never be comical to himself. He neglects (and illustrates!) the difference of national taste in comedy, save so far as he can connect it with the variety of national social customs. He neglects any laughter that is spontaneously hearty: his basis is the dogma that laughter is a social corrective, which he supports by special pleading from a realm of evolution which is purely speculative. He begins by remarking how elusive is the spirit of laughter, which no definition can imprison, and he does make this appear very convincing; for he himself would make what is essentially alive, dead and mechanical.

The book would repay a much more detailed analysis, and it is perfectly delightful to read.

RICHARD SMITH.

Cambridge, England.

FROM RELIGION TO PHILOSOPHY. By F. M. Cornford. London: Arnold, 1912. Pp. xx, 276.

Almost all human beings who have reached any degree of civilization hold, more or less confusedly, a variety of opinions which it would be possible to classify as attempts to solve the great enigmas of existence: Of what is the world made? What is the nature and destiny of the soul? Is there one God or many, and what is the nature of the connection between him (or them) and man and the world? What sort of things are right and wrong, good and evil, and why? We might then sort the solutions into two classes. In so far as the ideal which a